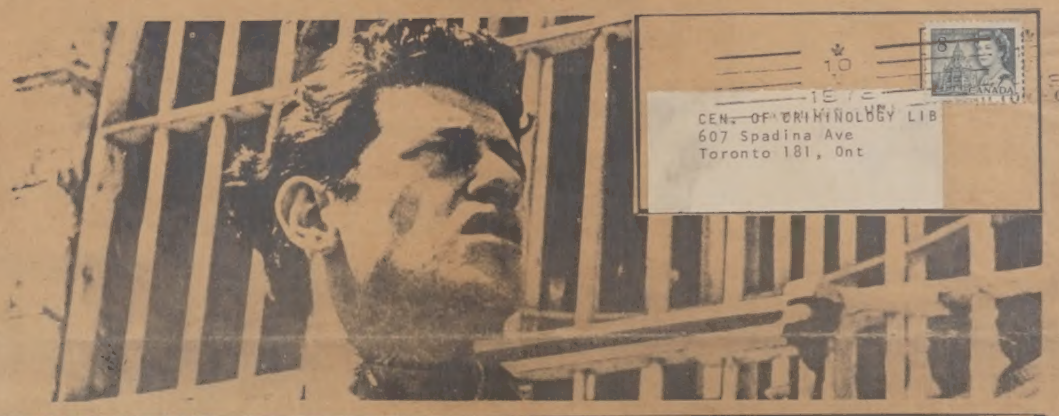

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BREAK THROUGH

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SECURITY ANXIETY & THE FLIGHT INTO PUNISHMENT

By Dr. J. W. Mohr

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF HAMILTON FEBRUARY 19th. 1973

I was asked to speak on the backlash concerning the administration of criminal justice. The phenomenon of backlash is real enough if one considers the development of public opinion on a number of issues as well as recent developments in the administration of criminal justice itself. However, the word "backlash" may seduce us to play the criminal law game ourselves in looking for the guilty ones and in apportioning the blame. By doing this we may forget (as we usually do in the criminal law process) that we, the enlightened ones, may have contributed as much to these developments as anybody else, and we may overlook the very serious lessons that are to be learned.

It may be more profitable to remind ourselves in general, and on the example of specific issues, that the criminal process as well as its reform is deeply embedded in public anxiety and public expectations of security. The examples used will be the reaction to the Bail Reform Act, the discussion on capital punishment, and the rise in the penitentiary population with a concomitant decrease in parole. In two of the three examples - the Bail Reform Act and the penitentiary and parole situation - we cannot present a concrete analysis because the data are either not in or their meaning is still obscure. The third case - capital punishment - I think very little can be added that has not been said five years or thirty years ago. However, the three examples, because they are taken from different areas, may help us to identify common features in the negative reactions that they have elicited, and if we cannot present a full set of data here we can at least say that neither are the public reactions based on a full set of data, and what may be even more confusing is that these reactions come at a time when the rise in the rate of crime (whatever that may mean) in terms of official statistics is levelling off.

In any case, the explanation is not likely to be found on the basis of hard data but rather in the sphere of public consciousness, public deception, and public anxiety. If we look at the changes that have occurred in what we define as "the backlash" we will find that the various points of view have not essentially changed. What has changed is the preponderance of views, the views that come into the foreground and become socially and politically effective. Since the retribution and punishment line seems to carry the day now, we have to ask ourselves what happened to the rehabilitative and humanist ideals to which we have aspired in the correctional system. There may be some reasons why our voices are not loud and strong enough to counterbalance others.

The data of the various reform and treatment enterprises have started to accumulate and they are sobering since they essentially tell us that our attempts, if measured on the impact on crime in terms of recidivism, have made little difference. In fact, voices have become louder than tell us, even from within our own ranks, that we may have done more harm than good. This may not be justified since the data do not support those voices either; however, they have thrown enough doubts in our minds that at the moment we are somewhat bewildered. If we would have based our reforms on strictly humanitarian grounds our voices could be as strong as ever. However, we have often based them on promises which we did not deliver and thus have in many ways raised unrealistic expectations that now come home to roost. It is unfortunate but nevertheless a reality that the public imagination is captured by promises, whether they are of the punishment and deterrance, or the treatment and rehabilitation variety, and it is very hard to conceive, for all of us, that both may be self-defeating illusions. For every case we may cite where we have helped somebody to find his way back into social respectability, the case can be cited on the other side where soembody has continued in a destructive lane, and which case is heard at any given point in time depends very much on what the public wants to hear. I think the data will eventually show that changing bail practices have, if anything, suffered through the Bail Reform Act, especially since the liberalizing of bail preceded the Act by some years. The jails, in some areas, are now fuller than they have ever been. The new Act, in addition, seems to have given us a reason to forget how unfair, unjust and fraught with evil practices bail really was. The lessen clearly is that new rules and procedures which do not meet with the practices and understanding of those who are supposed to carry them out are counter-productive. This should, however, serve also as an example that any call for law and order, if it does not meet with social realities, just leads to further reaction and polarization, be it in the case of policemen or criminals or the public in general.

Dr. J.W. Mohr (right) talks to J.K. Fairbanks, Executive Secretary (left) of John Howard Society at the Society's 17th annual dinner.

The alarming rise in the penitentiary population, especially in some provinces, is an example of a confusion in a system where the left hand does not know any more what the right hand does. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to analyze the situation properly, but it very much seems that a public conception has formed that parole made it possible for convicted offenders to move in one door of the prison and move out the other. Such data as we have shown that parole, in fact, reduced the sentences, if all sentences are taken into consideration, only by a minimal amount at the very best of times. The parole propaganda was more effective than parole itself in feeding the conception of wholesale release. In the rebound now we find that even this minimal effect of parole, what a colleague of mine has called the "decision to be slightly free", has been reduced and mandatory parole has been added. It seems very much that sentences have in fact lengthened, since the rise in the penitentiary population of provincial institutions. Clearly, however, very little notice has been taken by the public of these facts.

This is not surprising since even members of the criminal justice and corrections sytems themselves are largely unable to understand and gauge their particular input and its consequences. One gets the image of a great number of people in the belly of a ship holding levers of control of a machine they do not trust and orienting themselves to the shouts they hear from outside. If everybody fiddles on his controls in a complex system, the system is soon overloaded by contradictory messages and will behave in an erractic way. Controls will jam and the people will end up kicking the machine.

In biological systems, we speak of stress, and in psychological systems of anxiety. The drugs of choice may be tranquilizers like - let us just do our job, everything will be all right - or amphetamines, like - changes are needed urgently. All kinds of combinations are possible, usually taking the form of private use of tranquilizers (just what the doctor ordered) and the juicing up on public speed. To take up the slack in between one can throw in a bit of the green grass of private fantasies or the heroin of playing with capital punishment which seems to give an emotional kick to a number of people.

Surely it is not new to us that when one is in the grip of frustration and tension one falls back onto more primitive means to cope with a situation. Magic solutions or brute force are only with

Cont'd on pg. 8

Letters To The Editor

Rip - Off

Dear Sir:

Your paper is a rip-off. But perhaps the fault doesn't lie at the feet of the staff at the Break-Through offices. Perhaps the largest percentage of blame for a Milktoast Publication like yours is the prison system's and penitentiary service's indirect control over the contents of any publication that is directed toward change in the prison system.

I am sure that you are aware that the most meaningful material, the most relative information about prisons and their conditions, never reach your offices due to the censorship powers of the 'System'.

Your motto, "Without Fear, Favor or Politics" is a joke. And your passive attitude toward the real problems facing Canadian prisoners will, in the end, only prove your fear of censure, the favor you show the system and your lean toward the political powers that control the contents of your paper.

A Disappointed Subscriber

From Within A Single Cell

Dear Editor:

I am writing this from within a single cell that affords me a quiet and peaceful surrounding in which to write.

My name is Motherall, my number is 316 and in the event that you haven't already guessed, I'm in jail. That's not important though because jail is only the building that puts a limit on a man's freedom. What is important is the feelings that live within a man confined for any considerable length of time.

A man can accept the loss of his freedom though it is difficult and sometimes painful, but he can't accept the anxiety and loneliness within himself that so often accompanies it.

Granted a man or woman in jail is there for punishment and correction. The loss of freedom is their punishment. The knowledge and guidance of professional people, including the Correctional Officers in Male Institutions and Matrons in Female institutions, provide their corrections to these people, as much as they help, are not enough to end the frustration caused by the anxiety and loneliness. Only a society that is more involved with these men and women can end the frustration. The feelings shared by men and women in such institutions all over Canada reflect their belief that society no longer cares for them. Rejection is a hard feeling to deal with and these men and women do have feelings.

I realize that there are some men and women now in custody who have committed violent crimes, and I feel this was only because their mental capacity at the time allowed them no recourse.

Does this mean that they should be tucked away and forgotten by the outside world or does it mean that more people from that outside world should be getting involved and asking what they can do to aid in the correction of these confined people?

In my opinion if these men and women in custody were shown that society is interested in them, a great majority of them would react favorably. But on the other hand if these men and women are forgotten by society, it is my opinion that they will then view society with the same coldness that society showed them.

Temporary leaves, where a man or woman can leave their particular institution in certain circumstances, I feel, are a big step toward a better correctional system. They give the men and women involved a feeling of trust and responsibility. There are some who break the trust and throw off the responsibility but they are a very small minority. If the media had the time to tell of the many thousand -2- dividual successful passes, the public would understand just how small that minority is. In my opinion, that minority can be made even smaller by finer screening and more interest from the outside.

I could go on into what I think are the faults in our present correctional system but it would do no good without outside interest. If the society is interested, people will find the faults themselves, just through being involved. Those of us living within the correctional system can do very little, if anything to change it. The job belongs to an interested society.

James D. Motherall

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

Editor Of: "Break Through"

I would like to express my congratulations to the all concerned of "Break-Through" for the fantastic job you are doing. After reading several editions, I am thoroughly aware and pleased that people are able to communicate to a good degree with everyone within the institutions; considering that previous to this communication was practically non-existant. I can only hope that both communication as well as Break-Through will continue to grow: I am at a loss for suggesting improvements because in my view it lacks nothing: what else can I say? I love it.

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

2- Heaping Cups of Patience
1 - Heartful of Love
1 - Landful of Understanding
Dash of Laughter
Generous sprinkle of kindness
Plenty of Faith

(NOTE) It's that simple. Thanks Guys. Yours is the A.A. Fellowship: - A sister who found her self respect through guys from down-below.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BREAK THROUGH

This publication was founded in 1969 to attempt to show the Canadian public that ex-inmates and inmates or prisons can and do contribute positively to Canadian Society. At that time ex-inmate groups were organizing and performing self-help and community service functions. Many groups have expanded, new groups have formed and some unfortunately, have disbanded. Our policy has not changed. We continue to publish as much "good news" as we receive.

Some inmates and ex-inmates would prefer that Break Through become a critical publication - criticizing the prison, parole and other community systems. The mass media cover that area sufficiently. It is not our policy to nail Government services or private agency services to the wall. Our policy is to tell the story of both inmate and ex-inmate who are involved in constructive programs whether these programs are sponsored by "Square" organizations or inmate and ex-inmate groups.

Nevertheless, when major issues are at stake Break Through is prepared to be constructively critical.

Break Through

An ex-offender publication serving offenders, ex-offenders and citizens at large, dedicated to penal reform and the education of the public.

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The Views and Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors of articles only.

BREAK THROUGH TEAM

Ron Osmachenko, Gord Vincent, Ken Langley, Keith Fairbank, Earl Henderson

MILLHAVEN NEWS By Steve S.

Millhaven had its first Softball Banquet on September 30th, 1972., it was a first in a Maximum Security Institution in the Kingston Region. Members of the community were invited, also guests of residents participating in the Softball Banquet. The Banquet was held in the Gymnasium, which was decorated in lively colours of the baseball uniforms and names of the teams. A big hand was given to the Sports Gang for the decorations and table arrangements.

The Master of Ceremony was a Resident Committee Member Ken Miller, he made introductions of the head table which are as follows: Left to right, Art Killer, Circule Softball Chief Umpire: Fred Leduc, winning pitcher of the Millhaven Baseball Congress: Ray Lawton, Social Director: Ken Miller: Paul Laird, Pres., of "U'S" Mens Club of Kingston: Art Slack, President Circle Softball League, and Jim Armstrong, Classification Officer.

Presenting the trophy to the Millhaven Sabres was Paul Laird. The best batting average went to Moe Kowell. The Most Valuable Player awards went to Andy Gagon, and John Drummond, the Most Polite Player Award went to Dave Birt, and the Best Pitching Award went to Bud Smith.

After everyone had dinner, which was a beautiful steak dinner, it was followed by two short films one was about Hockey entitled, "Blades and Glass" and the other film was of the 1968 Baseball World Series between St. Louis Cards and the Detroit Tigers.

By Steve Sinclair

EDITOR'S NOTE - With last issue being on Capital Punishment all articles not related to that topic were held over.

Stoney Mountain By S. Allan M.

The Guys at Break Through:

Just a simple message to all you Cats down East. Stony Mountain is alive and heavily populated!!!!! Having a little trouble up here, though....No news from you fellows leaves me to wonder just what the hell is going on sometime...You guys got a deadline down there?...sure wish you'd let me know...Sorry to hear Les is no longer with the outfit...Wish him the best though...Having other problems that have to do with our Joint Rag...Inside-Outside...Editor Tony Stoner is experiencing all sorts of difficulties...from both ends...Getting articles from the guys...and then getting them approved...Bad scene...Anyone else having the same trouble? Poor guy...Know exactly what he's going through...Use to have the same problem when Yours Truly was editing a while back...Congratulations to the guys out at the Head for their new Gavel Club...Just Monday we celebrated our Fourth Anniversary in the Secondus Club...Big banquet...Ninety guests from outside...There's an article somewhere around here concerning that though...For the guys at the Head—All the guys at Secondus wish you the best...We are just in the stages of transition to a full Toastmaster Club...Merry Xmas & the Best of 73 to you guys at the Head...Same goes to the Toastmasters in Per Se at Prince Albert; Dino Val at Drumheller; Altus at the Farm Annex at Stony—quite a few of those Gavel Clubs around...Must be good thing!

...Will have a big article for you fellows when the Toastmasters in here have their Charter Night...Should be a good night...I was wondering...do you fellows ever get around?...Do you ever travel and visit various Joints around the Canadian Scene?...If you ever get a chance to drop in on me some time, please do...Got a few things to ask you guys...Any idea when the new Prison Arts Contest will be starting?...Let me know and I'll start pushing it at this end...Incidentally, in our last issue of the Joint Rag, I mentioned you guys and quoted your price for one year...(a mere two bucks)...but so far...nothing!...And that about pretty well indicates how things are around here...(indifferent & slow)...Well, gotta split for now, fellows...Drop me a line or something, huh?...Merry Xmas & the Best of the New Year to you fellows!!! You're doing a great job...Keep it up!!!

Inmates take mechanic course.

Responsibility Of The Press

Over the past year the press have published bias opinion, emotional reactions and negative consequences of correctional programs which stress rehabilitation. Recently the facts contained in the above address which warned of an explosion of prison population became a reality. The population of the penitentiary system is up 1000 over last year. If this explosion continues perhaps the old sections of Kingston Penitentiary and St. Vincent De Paul will have to be re-occupied.

The press, especially locally clamoured for a scoop on this possibility. Why? Are they concerned about the people who would live in these dungeons? The press hardly complained prior to the K.P. Riot. Are they looking for another opportunity to slap the Federal Government? Are they looking for another negative sensational scoop to sell newspapers?

The prison population could be increasing for many reasons: mandatory parole violators, higher unemployment, more and longer prison sentences and fewer paroles. Politicians and judges are sensitive to public opinion, which could account for fewer paroles and increased prison sentences. But what is public opinion?

To-day public opinion is the instant communication of opinion expressed by the mass media. Whether the press wish to admit it or not - they shape public opinion. They select what is news — they select what is communicated. The press, by supporting hard line punitive correctional methods (which have failed for centuries), have some part of the responsibility for the increase in prison population, an increase which is costing the Canadian taxpayer an additional $10,000. per year, in Federal Penitentiaries alone!

Look for facts - not opinions.

Then form your own opinion.

Convicts Visit Retarded-U.S. Experiment Pays Off

Spectator - Wed., Jan. 3, 1973

Even before the royal-blue bus sputters to a halt, the 16 men aboard are scrambling for the exits, hurrying to get inside the tan brick building. Giovanni, tall and skinny with a droopy mustache, heads for the nursery. "Where's Robin?" he anxiously asks. His face brightens as he spots the button-nosed 5 year-old who knows him only by squeezing the gold medallion hung about his neck.

In Ward 21, John playfully tousels the hair of a sad-faced 20-year-old. "Hiya Diane. How are you, Baby?" He plunks his blue work cap on her head. She doesn't look up from her rocking chair, but a little smile appears. Other men rush off to change diapers, to feed, and to bathe their charges. Nurses grin, wards perk up: there's an air of bustle and excitement in the Greene Blind Unit of The Walter E. Fernald State School for the Mentally Retarded. The convicts from Concord, Mass., Prison have arrived.

It's a sight to behold. The armed robber, the second-degree murderer come to tend the youngster with the futile stare and the deficient mind. Isn't her hair nice and shiny? I brought her baby shampoo myself. Each brings to the other's daily drudgery one bright, meaningful moment. I'd rather work with the younger ones. You can pick them up, hold them. Each works to rehabilitate the other — with one difference. The youngsters will never leave the high walls and barred windows.

"We thought we had problems", sighs Joel, the inmate with the green-sleeved sweat shirt. "We didn't even know what problems were 'til we saw these kids."

It's impossible to tell who benefits more.

Take Sparky, he was a con for 17 years, murder, paroled just last week. Wouldn't talk to anyone. Then he started working with little Susie, who wouldn't do nothing' but sit in bed and whine all day. In seven months, and I tell you I seen it myself, he had her walking and riding a tricycle and playin' on the swings and the slide, you know? He's coming back too. Next week. He's going to work here, regular.

"They walk in here like so many James Cagneys, hostile, gruff, or indifferent, just along for the ride," says Paul McDade. Blind Unit Administrator. "But even the toughest change and it isn't from any overt effort on our part".

CALL FOR RECRUITS

The volunteer program began as an act of desperation 4½ years ago. The Fernald School's building for severely disturbed adult males was extremely rundown. "The first time I walked in," recalls McDade, "the smell of urine, feces, and garbage was so bad I walked out and threw up." No workman would go near, nor would many doctors, nurses, or even relatives. Thus there was a call for recruits to come from the nearby Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Concord. The inmates scrubbed the walls 100 times, painted them, fixed plumbing and electricity, and then started cleaning the patients. That done, they began working with blind children.

Since then several hundred Concord inmates have participated, with happy results all around. "The children learn to expect them to come" says one nurse. "It's the only consistent thing in their lives except feedings". Parents are pleased, says McDade: "They'll say, "How come Susie's progressed so much lately?" and I'll tell them about the prisoners. Not one parent has ever objected."

NOT JUST PICKING BEANS

One other Massachusetts Institution, the prison at Norfolk, has since undertaken an identical project and other states are gearing up for similar programs of their own. "It's the most meaningful job-training program we've had, says Morris Newman, Concord's Co-Administrator for Counseling Services. "It gives them an opportunity to learn good work skills and habits, to help people, and to help themselves. They come away with a better self-image." Says one inmate: "It gives you a little pride. You really feel like you're doing something worthwhile. Not just picking beans on the farm."

Marianne, did you do your duty today? Has she been doing duty regularly? I'll tell you something: "I think she likes the bathroom over there better. More privacy."

Not all prisoners can participate. Heavy drug users, alcoholics, sex offenders, men who have exhibited certain kinds of agressive behavior, and those with severe psychological problems are automatically disqualified by the Fernald-Concord Selection Committee. "Even so", says Newman, "we usually get 12 to 15 applicants for every three openings."

One other requirement: Volunteers must be living at the Minimum-Security Prison Farm and must be within six months of consideration for parole. "The closer they are to getting out," says McDade, "the less likely they will try to escape."

Two unarmed security officers from the prison accompany the men on the 23-mile ride to Waltham, but they cannot keep an eye on everyone during the 6½ hour stay at Fernald. Thus escape is relatively simple, but only seven or eight have ever tried it - and all were caught. "They are on their best behavior", says McDade, "because they want the program to continue. Anybody who misbehaves gets worked over by one of the others back at the farm."

I don't know how much to give her, you know? She doesn't seem to like liver. Hey, she gotta finish dis whole thing?

One of the problems faced by the volunteers (McDade calls them volunteers.) (the men refer to themselves as Cons) is how to take care of the patients. "The first day I was here," says one, "A nurse told me to change a diaper. I said, "Hey, how do you do that? Next day I am told it's suppository day. Go down and take care of Albert. Now that was a lot of fun, whew!

Says another: "I was scared of handling them wrong. Some have no muscles in their necks and I was just a little nervous about what to do with their heads." Seemingly the Blind Unit staff's only complaint about the inmates, outside of excessive flirting, is the lack of training. They expect to teach Johnny to throw a ball right away," says Teacher Margaret Moore. "Instead they get assigned to a 30-year-old man who drools. Some get discouraged and end up just sitting around. They haven't been taught to look for little signs of progress. The most successful are the men who are personally motivated."

Some are so motivated, in fact, that recently, when the men volunteered to spend three weeks transforming a crumbling old building into a Recreation Centre, several skipped lunch to visit their favorite patients. "They expect us to come", says one inmate. Says Miss Moore: Privately, I think they feel less guilty about their own kids when they can spend time with others."

Peter, Peter, don't scratch. No, no Baby. Isn't it terrible? His father hasn't come to see him in five years.

Though few inmates work at Fernald more than six months before they are paroled, many return to take jobs after parole. From 3 to 12 parolees generally are on the staff, receiving a maximum salary of $116 a week, with a room available on the grounds for $2.50 a week. "We let them work here six to eight months," says McDade, "then we encourage them to seek other jobs or go back to school."

At least one of the current volunteers, John, is hoping to join the staff when paroled. And at least one other, Earl, hopes to duck out of the volunteer program before parole and enter another work detail: "Man, you only get 50 cents a day here, I want to do something that pays."

Neither the 50 cents nor the fact he will never turn his patient into a bright, healthy human being seems to daunt Joel: "If I seen a kid smiling, I'm happy."

Upstart By Stephen S.

It is common knowledge that society is problematic and in the course of change and growth some people fail to adjust to this change. One type of person that has been born out of this failure to adjust is the criminal, that is, the person who uses crime to attract attention or attempts to further his cause by criminal acts.

Upstart makes the assumption that any human can be the helping agent for themselves and other, that many human beings will exercise this capacity - given a appropriate setting - and that all human beings must ultimately be the true source of their own mutual understanding.

AIMS:

1. To resocialize and make inmates aware of their effect upon others and change their value system through example, lectures, reflections and assimilation.

2. Improve the material content of the course to the extent where better methods can be employed in the reformation of inmates in our correctional institutions, with prisoners helping each other in this milieu.

PURPOSE:

(A) Developing social habits compatible with those of civilians.

(B) Produce content for a social-development course to be made available to other interested fellow inmates.

SOCIAL CREED:

Be genuinely interested in others and express their interest. Look for opportunities to serve others and be concerned with their needs. Respect the rights of others. Show them you think they are important. Be cheerful. Smile and develop a pleasant attitude. Be a good listener. Develop interest in a person's ideas and let him talk about himself.

HYPOTHESIS:

In looking around us, we see that persons in prison, commonly, behave in either negative or neutral ways toward others. They are extremely frigid against transceiving positive emotional communication with others. Our curiosity about this common coldness of persons in prison, led us to go out hunting for the possible causes behind it.

We found that in the case of every prisoner questioned, they had started off, and continued, to function normally well toward others, until experience of a shockingly hurtful breach of their trust in one person, to treat themselves lovingly. Many persons who haven't been in prison, may have experienced the same kind of upset, early in their healthy human-relations development, but perhaps reacted passively to the catastrophe. The person in prison, when he became functional again, immediately set out to build up a defence against being vulnerable to a recurrence of the catastrophe. He found that using negative behavioural responses, to repel anyone from trying to initiate positive emotional intercourse with himself worked very well to protect him from the dreaded consequences, of a violation of a trust in anyone, to treat him with genuine affection. Now, when we look around us, we think we know why persons in prison, commonly, behave in either of neutral ways toward others.

Many persons in prison are in the habit of behaving negatively toward others, merely because they have not learned to realistically understand, and appreciate, the real and true (instead of the fanciful and imaginary) effects and results, of positive and constructive interpersonal relationships. Upon learning this, they would no longer be afraid to transceive positive emotional communication with others. They would no longer be afraid to engage in true affectionate intercourse with persons they are emotionally attracted to. If they ever realized the self-satisfaction gained from maintaining interpersonal relationships with others (that can't be gotten in prison), they would not want to risk loss of same. They might even refrain from doing anything negative, that could separate them from their source of feeling good.

PRISON THAT SENDS ITS MEN TO TOWN

DRUMHELLER, ALTA. - Drop into a restaurant in this town of 5,000 people and it's possible to encounter convicted murderers having coffee. They're inmates of Drumheller Institution, a Penitentiary where ideas in penology are pioneered.

Its inmates hold full time jobs on the outside, start businesses of their own, attend university in Calgary 90 miles to the southwest, referee sports events on the outside, attend hockey games in the Drumheller Arena and send bands to town parades.

To an outsider, it might appear that Drumheller has reached the stage where inmates merely drop the warden an occasional note to let him know what they're doing.

But Drumheller - for all its innovations - is still a Penitentiary. Warden Pierre Jutras will tell you that. So will his staff. And so will the Institution's 390 inmates.

Mr. Jutras points out that "unless you have a man in custody, you can't help him any."

It might appear that prisoners ramble the countryside at will, but a highly complex temporary absence system governs

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KINGSTON PENITENTIARY

VIEW FROM INSIDE

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
PRISON: VIEW FROM INSIDE
WEEKEND ISSUE
September 30, 1968

(Excerpts from a speech by the Chairman of the Inmate Advisory Council, Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Walpole, to selected inmates and members of the institution staff.)

O.K. I'm going to tell you like it is. My topic tonight is about the revolving door. It's only an imaginary door, but real in more ways than one. With the youngsters who starts doing time at the age of 17 or 18, it doesn't even exist. But it's there all right. When that revolving door keeps turning in that vicious cycle for the next 20 or 30 years of that kid's life, he really learns to hate. Why though? Why this vicious cycle of coming in and out of prison year after year?

It's a big question and it demands an answer. Is it the environment, the broken homes, the poor education? All that contributes, but the biggest fault is the prison's failure to afford the things lacking in the person's life that brought him here in the first place. Education, Vocational Training, Guidance in the right directions. That's what prisons should offer, but what in fact do they offer to the youngster who comes in and doesn't know which way to turn?

I'll tell you! We have in this prison workshops that serve no useful purpose, other than to make more money for the state. Do you want to see a kid come in here for five or ten years, and learn how to make licence plates for your cars, sewer covers for your streets, toilet brushes for your bathrooms? Is it? These shops breed crime schools. In fact, Walpole State Prison is a crime school because of these useless shops. Want to learn how to crack a safe, pick a lock, rob a bank? Well come to Walpole State Prison and you can learn. You may not become an expert, but you can learn the fundamentals.

Can you fathom what I am saying? Men are in here screaming! Begging! And Yes, even pleading for the opportunity, just the opportunity to make better people out of themselves, to become useful citizens someday. Open the doors for them! Get rid of these useless shops, and start programs of vocational training such as automotive mechanics, electronics, typewriter repair, and masonry. Get better educational facilities here! With a prison population of 556 inmates, we have but two available classrooms.

The Christian And The Criminal

By J.T.L.James

All of us have faced, or should face, the question of whether there is a distinctively Christian approach to the criminal, or whether we are merely responding in a humane, humanist, or humanitarian way. The Christian approach, if there is one, should offer no less than these others, but can it be significantly different? Further, for those who seek a Christian vocation, does the possible Christian input into such work make correctional and rehabilitative work a valid Christian vocation? the question to which this article is addressed, then is this: "Why should you as a Christian be especially concerned with this area?" Once you have a firm committment to the 'why', then the 'how' is not hard to work out in practical field.

BUNGLING CHRISTIANS

My impression gained from working informally and formally in the corrections field for some fifteen years is that Christians have a bad image in it. At best they are seen as well-meaning but uninformed; at worst, as bungling; or perhaps merely disinterested. Unfortunately, I feel that the reputation is well deserved.

This ought not to be so. I firmly believe that Christians have a unique rationale involvement in this field. The reason I put in the form of a very bad pun: "Christians and criminals have one thing in common, they are both people with convictions." True Christianity and criminality are each a matter of deeply held convictions, sets of learned attitudes and values which lead to sets of determined actions the consequences of which both true Christians and true criminals are prepared to face. The Christian who has faced what it means to be a Christian should, therefore, be able to understand the criminal who has faced up to his convictions. Of course, there are many more nominal Christians who lack a firm faith, just as there are many more casual offenders than there are hardened criminals.

We who call ourselves Christian, then, should first face up to the implication of our profession, and see how this should lead us to react towards the criminal.

The definition I choose to apply to the priestly character of the Christian is simply this: Christ-like-ness. The Christian is called to be an "other Christ". Let's work on the implications of this definition.

In any area of life where one person interacts with another, and clearly in any area where one person exerts control over another, there is bound to be a feeling that someone is playing 'God". However much one may try to eliminate this, nonetheless the probability is there. I say, let us accept the fact, if it is inescapable. But let us play the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. It has often been said: "If people can't find Christ in Christians, where in this world are they to find him?" So let us consciously strive to be Christ-like, so He may be found in us, whether we are consciously "playing God" or not.

BROTHER'S BROTHER

The modern 'prophet' of the U.S. civil rights movement, Dick Gregory, has commented on the frequently repeated question of Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?." He suggests that we must come to grips with a deeper question underlying it; "Am I my brother's brother?" For if I am his brother then the way in which I keep him may be different than the way in which I have been keeping him. If he is my brother, should I will his death by hanging even if my brother has killed? Should I keep him in a ghetto, on welfare, on a reserve or in an institution? Are any of these things possible if the Christ-in-me meets the Christ-in-him on equal terms as a brother.

It takes a great deal of security to be able to accept the other as he is, without fearing that we are comprising our principles. So we preach at best reassuring ourselves, for we seldom convince anyone else. We must be secure enough to risk contact without fearing contamination. Preaching from the rooftops, and handouts at arm's length will not accomplish conversion.

PROPER RESPONSE

The answer to this dilemma of preserving our integrity but reaching the other person is to accept this truism: 'Not to condemn, is not to condone." To put it scripturally: 'Neither do I condemn you; but go and sin no more.' It is possible, even in practical situations, to be non-judgmental, but at the same time uncompromising. Each of us must practice this, if we are ever to get close enough to a criminal so that our attitudes and values may rub off on him.

The proper Christian response to the offender can be summarized in another cliche: 'God hates sin, but loves sinners." Too often we work out our hate of the sin by hating the sinner. However horrible the crime, however difficult to discern the Christ-likeness in the criminal, the Christian's responsibility is to develop that image, not to destroy it. Those of us who have had the privilege of minister in the death cell know that even there, this is possible.

SUCKERS

One of the valid criticisms of Christians trying to minister to criminals is that Christians are 'suckers' marks', easy to put through.

Christians should be as Jesus was: soft hearted but hard hearted. We should be willing to be used, but unwilling to be abused. We should give a hand up, not a hand-out. These are all cliches, admittedly, but none the less true, in my opinion.

By our soft-headedness, we have allowed ourselves to be abused so consistently that the term 'do-gooder' has become applied to us as a label of scorn. What a sad reflection it is on us who claim to be followers of him who said "Love your enemies: do good to those who hate you." We owe it to him to rehabilitate the good name of the doer of good by consciously doing good, not allowing ourselves to be conned. While others do nothing, and some do harm to those who hate them, our witness should be of planned and deliberate good to those whom others neglect or reject.

The Christian message, conveyed in words or deeds, may not bring instant results. It may in fact prove so frustrating as to repel the other person for a time. When St. Stephen prayed for the forgiveness of his executioners, they were infuriated, but the message was not lost upon at least one, the young man Saul. Stephen didn't live to see the results of his witness.

VALID INSIGHT

If demythologizing is still a legitimate theological practice, there are many myths in the criminal justice field which the Christian should bring his insights to bear on demythologizing. Examples of valid Christian insight on criminological concerns are:

(a) That hate only breeds hate; and violence, violence. Love can interest the vicious circle of rejection that society perpetuates. Love may hurt the lover, but it is one of the sacrifices Christians are called on to make.

(b) Punishment in love may be thereapeutic, but punishment in hate is only damaging. Society is singularly unsuccessful in communicating if it really loves those it judicially punishes. Father loves the son he spanks. Does the guard love the inmate he lashes?

(c) Moral means must be used to bring about moral ends. It is immoral to punish one man in order to deter another.

(d) Christian experience proved deterrance doesn't work. Christians were not deterred by the execution of the martyrs. Why should we expect criminals to be deterred by the punishment of their brothers?

(e) Society seems to attribute its attitudes, values, and motives to those it seeks to reform. In fact, the true criminal holds opposite values, and these are often reinforced by our vain attempts to bring about change.

(f) The Church has a ministry to victims. They are much more likely to be members of a church than the criminals are! We need to be neighbour to the man who falls among thieves today on our streets. And part of our ministry to him is to help him face the fact that the thieves are his neighbours. It is even harder for the victim to do this than it is for us.

(g) Police and prison guards are brothers too. Theirs could and should be a Christian vocation, but it is all too easy for a Christian to be dehumanized and lose his vocation in these fields of work. Jailors are not often reassured and converted by prisoners singing and praying as Paul and Silas did!

(h) The Church should prophesy against the contradictions of society which often produce the criminal. Criminals are often the victims of a society which commands "Thou shalt covet."

As the Priestly role defines who we are, and the Prophetic what we say, the Pastoral defines what we do. our actions must match our words.

Like the other roles, the pastoral is a role for every Christian. The United Way slogan "If you don't do it, it won't get done" needs to be taken literally. It is a cop-out to expect the State, the Chaplain, the Salvation Army, or any one else to do it for us. You can't hire someone else to do your loving for you.

The "hand up" approach differs from the debased "hand-out" by requiring us to help them to help themselves. If it is "more blessed to give than to receive", we have certainly seen to it that we retained all the blessing for ourselves. We did all the giving, and forced them to be receivers only. Were we really blessed? Not by the receivers; probably not by God either.

If I have said little about what the Christian can do, and less about how to do it, it is because I believe these details can be worked out by anyone who is what he professes to be and is convinced that he must act according to his beliefs. What we are will determine what we do. What we are, or must become, has been my primary concern.

Pastors and Prophets are first Priests. You and I strive to be other Christs. To see Christ, the Christian, and the Criminal as sons of God, and brothers one of another. This is the start of the Christian solution to society's crime problem

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An address delivered to an ecumenical conference on "Christians and Due Process", Oakville, Ontario, January 20, 1973, and to a Seminar on "The Church and the Offender" sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba), Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 9, 1973.

The author is an Anglican priest, formerly a prison chaplain, now Coordinator of Volunteer Programs for the Manitoba Probation Service.

Religious Sects Mean Little In Prison

By Rev. John Nickels

Denominational divisions have little purpose in the prison system of today, according to Rev. John Nickels who is the Chief Chaplain for the Canadian Penitentiary Service.

Despite the lack of church affiliation for most prisoners, Rev. Nickels asked, "Why do we persist in tabulating the religion or denominational body of an inmate in our day and age?"

In an address over the weekend during the Ecumenical Conference on Christian involvement in penal institutions at St. Jude's Anglican Church, he said most men entering prisons not only lack a formal religion but they wish to register this.

The inmates of today think entirely differently than their predecessors because they don't accept authority and have no use for institutions, which "goes for our institutionalized religion," he said.

"Undoubtedly, the Church has a message for our family of inmates", Rev. Nickels added. Although unfashionable at present, he said one of the main purposes of the church in prison concerns the "Salvation of Men's Souls."

He referred to one of the major problems of Christian programs in Correctional Institutions as its "neglect of meditation."

Between 25-to-30 per cent of the men who attend chapel on a regular basis in prison will not bother with the church upon release, he said.

These "Jail-House Christians" come out of the institutions into a "blank" in society and at this point the church could pay a more active role in establishing halfway homes and helping them find employment, Rev. Nickels said.

"How much does forgiveness have to be experienced in a forgiving community?" he said. The church has to react to its brothers who have been in distress," he said. The church must consider how it is going to reach these men and women who have been incarcerated in society that is suffering from a moral and social identity complex, he explained.

Rev. Nickels pointed out there have been attempts to relate Christianity to the prisoners with a more up-to-date approach.

As a major thrust in reaching prisoners, a Chapel Week was begun in the Federal Penal Institutions last may, and 4,000 kits containing religious material were distributed to the inmates, he said.

Multi-purpose Christian Education Programs, involving not only religious instruction but counselling, visitation, book clubs and group sessions, have been introduced, Rev. Nickels said.

A new institutional research book enables both Catholics and Protestants to adapt services of worship more appropriate to the inmates, he said. Rev. Nickels forecast a greater development of chaplaincy centres instead of chapels in prisons which, in his view, would "broaden and strengthen the Christian Ministry."

He called for the church to educate the laity for greater community participation in helping inmates readjust to society.

"Representatives of the public are needed to assist to the re-integration of men and women into society who have been condemned into incarceration," he said.

Rev. Sid West, Co-ordinator of Correctional Services for the Anglican diocese of Toronto, agreed that volunteer groups could be "one of the most exciting things?" if it did not develop into a "gimmick."

He had noted gimmicks that developed in the penal system as answers to rehabilitation included the need for more psychiatrists, vocational training and therapeutic sessions, which have not solved the problem of crime and criminals.

Minister of Correctional services Syl Apps chats with Rev. John Nickels

ARTICLES NEEDED

As you, the reader, glance over this issue you will notice a large percentage of second hand material. This is largely due to a lack of original material coming from you the reader. Break Through is interested in articles which tell of inmate and ex-inmate participation in self help or community service projects. Don't wait to be formally invited! Please write of your programs to Break Through.

The Challenge Of The Church

An address given to a group of laymen at McMaster Divinity College

By J.K. Fairbank

The Spectator once did a feature article on the wives and families of men in prison. As the reporter talked to one mother, her infant son played on the floor. "And what about him, asked the reporter. Will he go to jail like his father?". The mother replied - "I don't want him to - but I expect he will".

Why!

It is my firm conviction that criminals are not born with personalities which make them criminal. It is my belief that their personalities are shaped, not just by parents or friends but by social circumstances. I am convinced that you and I, not only allow, but require for our own material wealth, degrading social circumstances which exist in our community. We don't really care what happens to the offender or the victim. We sacrifice people (not just the offender) in the name of profit margin.

I hope that I will not only be able to show historically how this situation has developed but to convince you that we must act to change our society.

Man requires certain physiological and social conditions in order to develop into a mature, confident, responsible person. He requires the basic needs of food and shelter. Then he wants the security of knowing that he will eat again to-morrow and have shelter from to-morrow's rain. These things secure - he turns to love - then respect and then prestige. He wants to know that he is unique, needed, loved and that he belongs. He wants to feel useful - he wants to share of himself with others. I maintain that our society does not answer those needs for a growing number of people.

A brief jaunt into history will reveal changes in our society which have created this atmosphere. The English Feudal Manor was a self-contained unit. It was small, clearly separate and truly a community. The Lord of the manor took responsibility for the lame, the blind, the mentally ill. Each person had a job to do. Everyone knew everyone. They had food and shelter. They had love for one-another. Security (perhaps at times too much security) abounded. Father taught son his trade. Social life revolved around the Church. Social misfits went to monastaries. Life was simple, predictable, secure and fulfilling. Even though it was often short and sometimes physically hard.

Towns grew up around the manors of rich lords who required Blacksmiths, Goldsmiths, Masons, etc. to build their castles and equip their armies. London developed around royalty. A city was in the making. This era lasted for several hundred years. Prisons were non-existant. Strangely enough most of our common law was created in this era when England was a Rural Agricultural Nation. Can you run a modern urban society on Rural Agricultural law?

By compressing a few centuries into a few statements perhaps the drastic nature of change will be apparent.

Wool became a major industry in the north. The Lords drove the peasant farmers off their lands. Sheep only require a few shepards. Towns and cities swelled with unskilled, unwanted people. Crime began to grow. Vagrancy was a serious offence. Country Churches were empty. City Churches were over-flowing. Social life had disappeared. The Church failed to adjust to social change.

The Industrial Revolution brought long hours, child labour, dirt and smog into the lives of city residents.

People were forced to accept social and working conditions which if found today, would result in the Industrialist or Landlord being charged with a criminal offence.

Subtle social pressures no longer were effective. Who cared who was in the stocks in the City Square. Nobody knew him anyway. As social customs died, laws were born. The Church - no longer the centre of social life - was no longer the centre of spiritual life. Its teachings had less and less effect on behaviour.

Increased technical knowledge brought mass production, mass communication, urbanization and mass society. Scientific knowledge about man, psychology and sociology were used to increase production, to standadize people, to expand the profit margin. Modern man became so psyched out in the name of progress - that a whole book was written on the ideal person for our society.

Success is marked in terms of the car one drives, the clothes he wears - whether his office is on the 3rd. or the top floor, whether there is a rug on the floor or whether his name plate is in phoney gold or artificial silver.

Some people have stopped and asked - "Is that all there is?".

Our system of economy demands that a number of people be unemployed. Full employment leads to competition for workers, which leads to higher wages, which leads to less profit which leads to less investment which leads to less production which leads to unemployment. Or we can have higher wages - higher prices and inflation. To curb inflation we create unemployment. Our economy is stable only when we maintain a constant level of unemployment, and inflation. But that is a political decision. Free enterprize is a myth. Free trade is a myth. Poverty is real.

What happens to our emotional needs in our society. In the past ten years there has been a radical change in moral values - family life - church - law - sex - marriage - the role of women - drugs - the role of youth and an usurge in violence. Where does one find emotional security? On what base can one plant his spiritual feet and know he has a firm base on which to build.

How many of us can develop a sense of belonging in the non-verbal atmosphere of an apartment building elèvator? How many assembly-line workers can gain a sense of accomplishment from their daily work? How many of us have enough spare cash to escape from the monotonous revolving door of living from pay day to bill payment?

Many people have successfully reached the goals of our society: A management position, a good income, a split level home in the suburbs, a new car or two in the drive and a summer property - only to find the goal an empty meaningless vacuum.

How many married couples enter the empty nest stage and suddenly realize that they are strangers to each other?

We sense that we have no control over our lives, over our schools, over our government and even over our own emotions. We are developing a society of neurotics, of drug users - of people trying to escape from our society. Our murder rate has increased, but our suicide rate is up nine times what it was ten years ago. As our anxiety grows we in desperation turn back to old methods, old philosophies, old values and lash back.

In the fields of education, industry, medicine and the social sciences we have learned that positive motivation is far more effective than punishment. History has taught us that subtle social pressures are a more effective control on human behaviour than flogging, banishment, mutilation or death. History has taught us that severe punishment does not work. Recent research has confirmed that tough, harsh punishment makes the recipient, more hostile, more dangerous and a greater threat to our society. In our anxiety we are returning to physical force as a means of control. This will only increase violence.

I want to look at our system of social control - the criminal justice and correctional systems. Who goes to jail? When a rich man goes to jail it makes front page headlines in our newspapers. Guelph Reformatory has a population of over 600 inmates. The average age is seventeen. Do we know any of them by name? - Do we even care who they are? Do we ever care who their victims were?

There is no such thing as an average inmate but one can calculate certain statistical norms among inmates. The average age is 24 yrs. - 95 percent are male - the average education is grade 9 - 85 percent have no trade skill - the majority came from inadequate homes - 75 percent have committed minor offences against property. A large percentage come from poverty ridden homes. They see themselves as failures in normal society.

Research in the school system gives some insight into our crime problem. Most children will do well in school from grade one to grade six. At that time, children from poorer homes loose interest, motivation and begin to fail. By grade 8 or 9 they are drop-outs. At age 11 or 12 they have developed social awareness as to their position in society. Subtle social messages tell them who they are, who their parents are and what is expected of them. Granted - much of this social expectation comes from parents as the mother I mentioned earlier, but the rest of this social message comes from us.

Another experiment revealed teacher prejudice. As students passed from one year to the next, the new teacher was given reverse information about student performance. Student performance reversed in the ensueing school year.

We are shaped as personalities by the way other people treat us. We create our own neurotics, pychotics, school drop-outs, welfare recipients and prison inmates.

Prisons are relatively new in human history. I hope that with the exception of the few offenders who are dangerous to the physical safety of others, that prisons will soon fade from existence.

Prisons as we know them were developed by the Quakers of Pennsylvania in the late 1700's. Until that time offenders were held in custody until sentence could be carried out - a sentence being - banishment, flogging, mutilation, or death. The Quakers were convinced that if an offender was left alone with the Bible, he would read it, meditate and become penitent. Therefore the single celled prisons they built were called penitentiaries. This system was a failure. Isolation drove many inmates into insanity. Since that time, modifications to the prison system have in essence been attempts to improve a failure.

At a time when we have the development of scientific knowledge, the social technology and trained people in key positions to do away with a system which has been a failure - we have an outcry of vengence among citizens.

The Bail Reform System was an attempt to reduce prison population in the local jails, and allow freedom to citizens until they were proven guilty. To-day we hear cries of molly-coddling - but our local jails are full.

Workers in the prison system have lived with the horror of seeing young men turn bitter, hard and cruel while in prison. Parole and the temporary absence system are attempts to reduce the negative effects of prison.

Honor camps with no locked doors or fences have worked smoothly for years. They depend upon the honesty, responsibility and decency of the very people our society felt were to untrustworthy to remain in the community. Now these programs are being condemned as leniency.

Our society is scape goating. We know things are not going right, we all sense a bewilderment, anxiety over the future and frustration with the present. We and especially our politicians are lashing out at those who cannot strike back. Our citizens in prisons. The ultimate emotional backlash has expressed itself in the growing support for Capital Punishment. Surely we can learn from our history that Capital Punishment was not, is not now and never will be a deterrent to violent crime.

The solution to crime is not to be found in prison. It is not to be found within the Correctional System. Methods of reducing crime are the same methods which will produce security, job satisfaction and deep meaning to life for every citizen.

50 percent of the men released from Federal Penitentiaries at the expiry of sentence will be in prison of some form again within six months. Very few leave prison with the intention of returning to prison. Community acceptance is minimal. People really don't care about people.

All societies are based around survival. The economic system - the means of production exist to produce life, support and sustenance for people. Our society must of necessity focus upon the economy. It must be built around the economy. But somewhere in our past - the means has become the end. People are now perceived as a means of production by industry. People are a commodity that is bought and sold. All the psychological research done by industry was not done to improve the lot of the workers, but to improve production. Our educational system is not geared to produce better citizens but to produce workers for industry. We need school drop-outs for assembly line work.

I am convinced that we must reverse the emphasis in our society or lose our sanity. The means of production exists for the sakes of people - not people for the sake of production.

The picture is not all black. Some people are aware of what must be done. The Volvo Motor Company now have teams of workers who assemble an entire engine, frame, body etc. A small, but perhaps significant emphasis on the meaning of work.

Some Senior Citizens Apartments have staff to plan social activities. What would happen if all apartments hired staff just for the purpose of introducing people to people.

How do you develop a sense of community? Do people to-day feel they really belong to a community. I live in Stoney Creek which still has a town atmosphere and spirit. When I attend a town planned function I meet people I know. In the last Town Election I actually knew one of the candidates. I feel a sense of identity and belonging to Stoney Creek. What will Regional Government do to that feeling. I personally oppose Regional Government.

To increase a sense of belonging we need to subdivide our cities - not physically, in the sense of major re-development, but socially according to area. Then socially people in eg. an area of four or five city blocks could be mobilized. The Church - which in my estimation has lost its force in society - could serve as the catalyst for such a movement. St. Andrew - the introducer, could be the new role of the church. A community could come alive. People could identify. People would not be alone. The old, the inadequate, the widow, the mentally ill, and the ex-inmate and you and I could find friendship and acceptance.

As I wind this presentation up I want to take acceptance just one step further. Remember the story of Martha and Mary when Christ would visit their home. One of the girls would hustle around the house preparing meals etc., the other would sit and quietly talk with Jesus. When Mary and Jesus talked I like to think that they shared things about themselves as people, as personalities. What a beautiful experience it is to slowly reveal yourself, doubts, your fears, your lusts and your passions to someone and have them accept you as you know you really are.

Christ praised Mary for this. This is a most rewarding experience. It is to me the essence of Christ's message. To love one another! We cannot love one another unless we know one another. We must get busy sharing ourselves with others and accepting what they share with us.

Emotional problems lead to mental illness, violence, crime, murder, family break-up, sexual deviances and a poor sense of self-worth.

Sharing these problems in an atmopshere of acceptance relieves the pressures which eventually lead to breakdown. Our personal project in the battle to save our society can be to learn how to share of ourselves and to help others to share with us in an atmopshere of acceptance.

TWELVE REWARDS

REMEMBER: OUR PRIMARY OBJECT IS NOT TO GET OUT — BUT TO STAY OUT

THE TWELVE REWARDS OF A.A.

In living according to the Twelve Steps and practicing them diligently as we know the Alcoholic must, we find time is a reward, or in fact Twelve Rewards, which are defined as follows:

1. Hope instead of desperation.
2. Faith, instead of despair.
3. Courage, instead of fear.
4. Peace of mind, instead of confusion.
5. Self-respect, instead of self-contempt.
6. Self-confidence, instead of helplessness.
7. The respect of others, instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean patterns of life, instead of a purposeless existance.
9. A clean conscience, instead of a sense of guilt.
10. Real friendship, instead of loneliness.
11. The love and understanding of our families, instead of their doubts and fears.
12. The freedom of a happy life, instead of the bondage of the alcoholic obsession.

Prison Walls

By Stephen S.

Prison walls do not confine,
The hearts of those who are inclined
Towards the thoughts of freedom dear,
The best in man is wasted here.

It's a poor fellow who can not take
His pleasure without asking other
Peoples permission.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CORRECTIONS

A. B. Whitelaw, Q.C.,
President,
John Howard Society of Ontario

The following address was delivered to the Annual Meeting of the John Howard Society of London on March 8, 1973, by A. B. Whitelaw, Q.C., President of the John Howard Society of Ontario. Because of its importance in stating the Agency's new philosophical base and directions, we are reprinting it in its entirety.

Mr. President, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

London is a lusty, useful branch which accepts challenges and knows how to deal with them. It is, perhaps, in this context that you have invited a President from Toronto to speak on the somewhat esoteric subject "New Directions in Corrections".

It is fashionable to refer, in such circumstances, to the "Winds of Change" (whatever they are) and to try to assess the direction in which they are blowing. In corrections we find ourselves in a most intriguing situation. Change is already upon us. In every sphere of correctional activity changes have already occurred so fast that many find themselves breathless.

The changes I refer to particularly are those initiated at government level: less emphasis on maximum security institutions (and a promise for a more enlightened design of some), proliferation of programs for education and training in medium and minimum security institutions, day parole for those attending university or for other good reasons, wide-spread use of parole as a counter to the stultifying, soul-destroying perversions of long incarceration, and the institution of mandatory supervision to ease the return of the offender to the community. These are but a few of the more important, government-imposed changes in the treatment of offenders at the institutional level.

The opponents of reform are given lines of ink and minutes of T.V. and radio time to express their opinion that society can only be protected by locking up criminals. Punishment, not rehabilitation should be the means if not the end.

In John Howard circles as I know them, this only means a new challenge and devising how we plan to meet it. As we well know, we have marked the appointment of a new Executive Director and an Associate Director with a full-scale study of our role in Corrections, our means of financing, and our use of the material and personnel resources of the community and, above all, the formulation of programs to carry this out. No longer are we content with being an "After Care" organization—we are vitally concerned with the offender from the moment of apprehension to his rehabilitation; we are vitally concerned with the community in the role of education, police co-operation and crime prevention.

A very important part of our metamorphosis is the streamlining and de-centralizing of our administrative processes. We have separated our Toronto office from our Provincial office for the first time and given the new Toronto organizers the fullest scope to recruit Board members who are dedicated to the concept of personal involvement with ex-inmates and the sharing of ideas and tasks with other like-minded community organizations. A new and significant role will be a slanting toward youth of our educational and crime prevention activities. We will seek a new role in striving to achieve a better and more compatible relationship between the community and the police.

The Ontario Board will continue to be (and to a greater degree) representative of the Branches dealing with common problems, particularly those in relation to Community Chests and governments. Primary responsibility for Chest relationships will, of course, remain with the Community organizations. The Provincial organization will administer its endowments to provide a continuing opportunity for staff training, for the development of new branches, studies in correctional matters and the development of new ideas. It will, hopefully, be more able to finance the making of educational films, training pamphlets, and the preparation of briefs and new releases for T.V. and radio programs and the enlargement of our contacts with members. The general membership will be asked to take a more than passive interest in the Society and to contribute their time, their advice, their opinions and knowledge as well as their $5 membership fee.

Community involvement is a watchword and slogan of the new wave in corrections. We are asked to make more use of *volunteers*, especially in the supervision of parolees. We of John Howard have seen this development for many years, particularly in our non-staff branches. It is a good development—a desirable development—but we must control it and assist it in its growth by the provision of adequate training and of professional staff advisors. However, trained, qualified, professional staff should not be unduly committed to the formulation of reports, the filing of returns and the answering of questionnaires so dear to the hearts of bureaucrats—particularly in the parole service. Community Assessments and pre-sentence reports are a good tool in formulating a background file on a man and his family but their role should be related to continuing contact and service. If we are to stay in Parole we must believe in it and in the fact that we can do a good job for the parolee and for the community. We must recognize that the Parole Service is qualified to perform supervisory functions and counselling activities adequately and efficiently and we must share in a common effort.

The former Solicitor General, Jean Paul Goyer, enunciated a partnership policy in corrections and in Parole Supervision—50% of parolees to the Parole Service and 50% to the Voluntary Agencies. A fine start—but it does not go far enough. We must develop a *real working* partnership with the Parole Service and with all other Voluntary Agencies so that we may share our respective expertise, experience and concern.

Community Involvement also means something else to me—it means active programs, particularly among youth and our inarticulate minorities, especially Indians, addicts, alcoholics and the poor. In these we will be contributing in some small way to the fight to remove the causes of crime. It means a well-planned series of educational programs designed to meet community needs. Nor must the children of the rich be overlooked in favour of those of the poor. If we espouse unpopular opinions or causes, criticize established institutions, methods, or techniques, or discredit widely-held beliefs in the cause of a campaign in which we believe, we must accept such unpopularity and try all the harder to make our point of view prevail. Where the need arises we must be evangelical rather than pragmatic, believers rather than dogmatists.

I firmly believe that Community Involvement means a new look at our relationship with the police—and theirs to us. We must press for more support for our local police and for their greater involvement in the community—not as a pressure group with right-wing tendencies but as a friendly, helpful, protective body in whom we have trust and respect. The final test of such respect and fairness arises in relationship to the police and the criminal himself. We must help the community to appreciate the awesome burden of responsibility we place on our police and to realize that this does not absolve the community from its own responsibility to the police and their task. We must balance such co-operation with the possible identification of our service with the forces of law—we must never be placed in the position where we have to choose sides. Our only ultimate responsibility is to the community and its interests.

Our community program in the aid of crime prevention should include a demand for more citizen control of police commissions. Not as a means to limit the scope of police effort, but as a means of focussing the attention of the community on its responsibilities.

Another way to restore the relationship between police and the community is to put less emphasis on cruiser patrols and more on "the cop on the beat". Where is Officer O'Reilly, the old-time cop—friend of the children, helper of the old and disabled, counsellor and friend? Gone, you say, with the times. Superseded by a few robots directed by remote control in cruisers whose coming is always "bad news". These puppets on the string of police radio are not in touch with their community—they are "they"—someone from outside—downtown symbols of the crushing power of authority. The idea of "Serve & Protect" is hard to make believable to many.

I am in favour of removing the "nuisance" tasks from police officers—the small annoyances—parking tickets and summons serving. Let's put our police in their proper role and leave the enforcement of such by-laws to others.

Conclusion

Please forgive these somewhat rambling and disjointed remarks and attribute them to one who does not serve his profession in coherent argument in court but spends his days in disjointed telephone communication with the four corners of the globe. Of such are Q.C.'s made!

Thank you for this opportunity, my swan song as President of the Ontario John Howard Society. My legacy to my successors is blood, sweat and tears.

EX-CHAPLAIN CRITIZES CHURCH VIEW OF CONVICTS

A former prison chaplain criticized the Church and its members over the weekend for their attitude towards criminals.

Rev. Tom James, a former prison chaplain felt "the church has a bad image" in the field of criminology.

Rev. James, who is now director of Compass, a volunteer organization in Winnipeg working with Juvenile Offenders, pointed out the failure of the church in serving prisons and criminals at the Ecumenical Conference on Christianity and Law at St. Jude's Anglican Church.

He criticized Christians for rejection of criminals despite the example of Christ who was always in the company of "ex-respectability of society".

The basic Christian attitude in the criminology field suffers from the "Salvation Army Syndrome" by letting others do the work, Rev. James said.

"I feel some Christians have the compulsion to save rather than serve," he said. Because their message of salvation or their value system is not accepted by the criminal element in society, and Christians are turned off, he said.

Rev. Tom James

As a prison chaplain, Rev. James found in administering to criminals the need to avoid the "God Talk" and the "Holy hardware on the walls."

"We are not condoning criminal action by not condemming the criminal," he said. Rev. James charged the Church and its members to maintain a distinction between the "doer and deed." "I fear we not only hate sin but the sinner," he said.

In communicating with the criminal counter-culture, it is essential to meet its needs but on terms that are mutually understood by both sides, he explained. As a priest serving in prison, Rev. James found he has two additional roles - prophet and pastor.

The Prophetic role, he defines, as vocal by keeping the church informed of developments in penal institutions without "flogging dead horses." He finds the church often coming out with a "cheap rehash" of sociological and psychological criticisms on prisons.

As a pastor, he says it is important to help inmates learn to do things for themselves to restore their integrity.

It is also the role of an Advocate by pushing for the acceptance of the former inmate and calling for lay assistance in and out of the prisons.

Participants at the Conference on Penology and the Church

From left, Rev. Tom James, Judie Baillie, Donald Sinclair, Rev. John Roberts

Ode to an ex-con's wife

The time has passed, I'm free at last,
Hello! my darling wife,
I've paid for sin, now lets begin,
Another start in life.

I'll never rob! I'll get a job,
You see, I've got a trade,
I'm sure my dear, the people here,
Need some mailbags made.

I've got a scheme, my little dream,
To keep me out of jail,
It's simple see, like one, two, three,
I'm sure it cannot fail.

Depends on you, here's what to do,
Just stick with me and then,
In every way, both night and day,
Remind me of the pen.

Paint the walls, rooms and halls,
A morbid dingy grey,
And let a gust of wind and dust,
Blow in here every day.

In winter, sweet, turn off the heat,
And let the darkness in,
If it should be, too cold for me,
Walk past my room and grin.

Give me a broom to sweep my room,
But cut the handle through,
Give me a light, thats not too bright,
A forty-watt will do.

A table here, a wooden chair,
A rag to wash the floor,
Another thing, be sure to string,
An earphone near my door.

Back there in jail, I used a pail,
To shave with looking glass,
Give me a blade that someone made,
To use for cutting grass!

And dear, I hope you'll give me soap,
That never lathers up,
A brush that's tough, hard and rough,
A plain metallic cup.

If you and me, should watch T.V.
I mustn't hear the sound,
So yell, my sweet and stamp your feet,
Then move your chair around,
We'll go to church, but you must search,
This guy when he comes out,
Be on your toes and search my clothes,
Each time I move about.

Each time I wash, be sure to squash,
My clothes up in a ball,
Then put them in a metal bin.

My shoes and pants and all,
Include two socks within the box,
One short and one too long,
Never admit, that they don't fit,
Just sneer and say: "You're wrong."

A cigarette! O thanks my pet,
But not a tailor made,
Those years alone I rolled my own.
On the salary, I was paid.

An ash-tray boss, No thanks I'll toss,
My butt upon the rug,
A drinking glass, I'll have to pass,
I use a metal mug.

When I am ill, give me a pill,
Don't try to understand,
Just send me off to choke and cough,
As long as I can stand,
If I complain about a pain,
Then stare me in the eye,
Say: "O.K. jerk, get back to work,"
Your kind will never die."

For supper make, a rubber steak,
Or serve some leather pork,
Use lots of lard and fry it hard,
Until it bends the fork.

Then heap some suds upon my spuds,
Or bake them dear in sand,
Make sure the skin is not too thin,
To break with mortal hand.

Whatever you fix, be sure to mix,
The courses all in one,
Carrotts, peas and maybe cheese,
Spill tea upon the bun.
When serving tea, it ought to be,
Cold as a Wardens heart,
And make the bread, like heavy lead,
That I can't tear apart.
And when you bake for goodness sake,
Put raisins in the pies,
But crunch them well, so I can't tell,
The currants from the flies.

It's understood that pie is good,
With cole slaw on the top,
My memory brings me many things,
That you can splash and slop.

Now don't you set the table pet,
For I'm not used to that,
Three times a day, give me a tray,
Then vamoose, beat it, scat.

I'd like it fine, if I could dine,
Inside the bathroom dear,
By sink and bowl (ignore the hole)
I'm used to that, I fear,
When I have ate, if it's not too late,
I'll walk around the yard.

But I want you to dress in blue,
Pretend that you're a guard,
Or better still, if you will,
Watch me walk up and down,
And give me hell, be sure to yell:
"Hey, get in line, you clown."

And when the sun, shows day is done,
Don't come to bed with me,
Many a year, upon the tier,
I slept alone, you see.

And don't you fret, my little pet,
As you may use the den,
We'll shout and call, across the hall,
As I did in the pen.

That mattress is too soft, Gee Whiz,
Get me another kind,
That's full of lumps and many bumps,
That stick in my behind.

The blankets too, will never do,
They're much too soft and fine,
Get me a pair, that horses wear,
And smell like turpentine.

Don't set the clock and don't you knock,
To wake me anymore,
Just use a gong and bang it long,
Outside my bedroom door.

When I get up, give me a cup,
Of coffee, muddy brown,
And make my toast, pale as a ghost,
Or black as a judge's gown.

You want me home, no more to roam,
Then heed my little tale,
So I'll recall the months and all,
The years I spent in jail.

Remind me dear, all through the year,
In everything you do,
And you can bet, a million, Pet,
I'll stay right here with you.

JUDGE LETS FLY

Montreal (C.P.) A Session Court judge, launched an angry attack on the administration of justice here, after a lawyer asked for postponement of a case against a man accused of armed robbery.

Judge Andre' Chaloux, visibly angered said "What am I supposed to do with the accused, send him back to jail for eight more days? The system is rotten. I've got a mind to liberate the accused and I would if the offence wasn't so serious."

"Judges are always blamed for delays in proceedings" he said "But the fault lies with the system of justice. People, taxpayers like you and me have come here at a great inconvenience, even lost money...policemen who have worked all night and haven't slept are waiting to testify. It makes me mad, I've got no tools to work with" he said. "I feel I'm working for nothing, if this is the system then I'm fed up with it. We can't tolerate this, we never seem to proceed," he went on to the amazement of the courtroom.

He said, "the authorities will be on my back tomorrow but if they're not satisfied with my conduct they can replace me, but I intend to defend myself." "I wouldn't accept these lengthy delays when I was a lawyer, and I still can't accept them."

He then postponed the case to a later date.

Don't Be Fooled By Me

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the face I wear.
For I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid to take off.
And none of them are me.
Pretending is an art that's second nature with me, but don't be fooled.
for God's sake don't be fooled.
I give the impression that I'm secure,
that all is sunny and unruffled with me,
within as well as without,
that confidence is my name and coolness my game;
that the water's calm and I'm in command,
and that I need no one
But don't believe me, Please.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask.
Beneath this lies no complacence.
Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, and aloneness.
But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear of being exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
a nonchalant, sophisticated facade,
to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows.
But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation
and I know it.
That is if it's followed by acceptance, if it's followed by love, that I am worth something.

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to.
I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh at me,
and your laugh would kill me.
I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm no good
and that you will see this and reject me.
So I play my game, my desperate game,
with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.
And so begins the parade of masks. And my life becomes a front.

I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk.
I tell you everything that is really nothing,
and nothing of what's everything,
Of what's crying within me;
so when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying.
Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying,
what I'd like to be able to say,
what for survival I need to say, but what I can't say.

I dislike hiding. Honestly!
I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the phony game.
I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me,
but you've got to help me. You've got to hold
out your hand,
even when that's the last thing I seem to want.
Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of breathing death.
Only you can call me into aliveness.
Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging,
each time you try to understand because you really care,
my heart begins to grow wings, very small wings, very feeble wings,
but wings.
With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding,
you can breathe life into me. I want you to know that.

I want you to know how important you are to me.
how you can be the creator of the person that is me if you choose to.
Please choose to. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble,
you alone can remove my mask.
You alone can release me from my shadow world of panic and uncertainty,
from my lonely person. Do not pass me by.
Please...do not pass me by.
It will not be easy for you.
A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.
The nearer you approach me, the blinder I strike back.
I fight against the very thing I cry out for,
but I am told that love is stronger than walls, and in this lies my hope.
Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands,
but with gentle hands - for a child is very sensitive.
Who am I, you may wonder. I am someone you know very well.
For I am every man you meet and I am every woman you meet.

Security Anxiety

Cont'd from pg. 1

unrealistic expectations of treatment, ritualistic defences of the law, or the crude invocation of the big stick, they speak equally of our impotence to come to grips with a reality we may not even recognize any more.

What does all this mean to the work that you do in your Society? One should really leave this to you, but let me ask you not to be discouraged by the present trend. I know that you have already risen to the charge of re-evaluating your work and this new challenge should help you to re-assert the witness that John Howard himself has given. To tell it as you see it, the real story, without accusation and without excuses, without technical language and violent technological solutions, to tell a story not of your successes and failures because all those imply of your experience which is infinitely richer than the screen and print version of crome withwhich most of us gorge ourselves. Although your story is harder to tell and harder to listen to, it has to be attempted if we want to find a way back into a human reality in this business of preconceptions, but the story crime, which always has been and always will be with us and always has to be derstood afresh and anew. In time you may even convince the law to help you tell this story rather than to attempt to maintain ritual's which get emptier every year.

Let me finish with what has become a litany for myself and which I cannot resist to repeat to myself and to capitvate audience. And that is that we must not forget over our daily preoccupations that the drama of crime and punishment between us is deeply linked to and reflective of the drama that goes on inside us. Bail after all is conditional liberty before trial and I think we experience - all of us - great understanding about the freedoms we have gained in regard to capital punishment we must not forget that relatively few people think seriously of murder but a great number consider at some stages in their lives to inflict this sentence on themselves and in fact a fair number carry it out. Prison and parole are also not strange to us who always build, leave and return to our handcrafted prisons within ourselves. The public domain in many ways gives us a metaphor and a language. A metaphor and language which we can use to express ourselves and thus gain real freedom in mutual understanding, or we can use it to hind behind and to remain in bondage.

GLASSER THEORY

By Ken Langley

Dr. Glasser contends that behaviour is dictated by basic human needs: e.g. love, responsibility and worth. There seems to be a wall that separates the "successful people" from those who have followed a path of delinquency or withdrawal from the real world as their means of finding their identity.

Let me emphasize that it is important for all of us to have an identity and more "I am because I am", by following a path of sharing love and respect for others, accepting and resolving our responsibilities we find within ourselves our real worth. Recognition of our real worth "I am because I am" is the apex of the struggle for humility. However there definitely is a major difference between humility and subservience.

The withdrawn, irresponsible individual is this way because he is unloved and has not been able to evaluate himself.

Most patients have a tendency to "label" themselves and they usually use the term "failure" for several reasons. Personal involvement on a one to one basis, showing that you care and you are interested, are the predominant tools to apply. We all are dependent on others, whether or not we like it, the fact remains we could do nothing in this world with this life if we were completely independent, for by becoming so, we isolate ourselves from the world! Yes, the only independant people in this world are in the back wards of our mental hospitals or in our jails. These so-called "expressions of independence" can be read about in our newspapers everyday. Hold-ups, killings, riots, etc. are means by which the lonely people find someone or something they can relate to.

Society seems to put these people into a separate group. For instance, the report card system in our public schools can make "Johnny" a failure at 7 years of age when, in black and white he is confronted with the fact that he didn't complete the work of Grade Two and so must return to the same class next year. The same room, the same teacher, the same topics, the only things different are the other children in the class, they are a year younger than he, yet, they look upon "Johnny" as a failure. Each day, Johnny is confronted with symbols of his failure, but not until the end of the term does he see the results of whatever he puts out and he can again be very susceptible to the "failure syndrome" if he finds his marks aren't as high as he thought they should be.

By putting people into failure groups we produce more failures. It is our job to help those with "failure identities" to find their way through the wall to the successful world. Happiness cannot be guaranteed, it is too fragile an emotion but these people can find small successes as really big non-failures.

Dr. Glasser presents eight principles of Reality Therapy techniques, these are largely a matter of trial and error and it must be emphasized that as long as you are trying to help someone it is unnecessary to be very skilled in the technique. This feeling is your failure syndrome manifesting itself!

1. Become involved with the patient in a warm and personal way. Recognize that he is not unmotivated, but, rather that he is motivated to failure.

2. Refuse to get involved with his misery, forget his history of failures as they can only re-inforce his inadequate feelings. Begin to intimate that it is the things he is doing that make him feel bad and a change in behaviour will change his attitudes.

3. Help him make a value judgment, do this with kindly concern, ask if his present acts contribute to success and he will reach his own conclusions.

4. Don't preach, nobody listens to a preacher, by doing so you take the load of responsibility from his shoulders and he really needs his conscience activated to feel guilty for his failures. Preaching emphasizes his failure and he feels brow beaten and unsuccessful again.

5. Help him make a plan on a daily basis at first, he must decide what he must do, and you will help, but, he must bear the responsibility of carrying out his plans.

6. Insist that he fulfill his commitments, but don't expect him to fulfill his commitments to you.

7. Don't accept excuses, don't ask why he didn't follow his plan, but rather when he intends to. Asking why gives him a chance to rationalize and qualify another failure. Be tough or he thinks you don't care and when he starts keeping his commitments to you he is on the road to success.

8. Don't punish him. The only reason we punish our children is to rationalize our own guilt for failure in raising our children in our concepts.

The only serious psychological problem is loneliness. By making these people feel wanted or needed creates an incentive for them to succeed, if only to please us, to show that they care about us. When they can react to return to the love we demonstrate to them they are showing success by defeating loneliness. "Now there are two of us!" and we are successes!

A failure oriented person is on a path he has chosen, the goal is to show him that he is responsible for whatever path he follows and that he and he alone has the right to and the choice of which path he will follow. By making him feel important, he will eventually "come through the wall" to your side because of his desires for acceptance. For failures are not acceptable in our society.

Temporary Leave Of Absence

By Ken Langley

Recently much publicity, all bad, has been released about temporary leaves from both Federal and Provincial Institutions. In spite of the adverse publicity the public is not aware of the tremendous success of this program. In fact it has been the most successful pgogram of any kind ever introduced in any institution.

Recently talk about conjugal visits has begun. I myself am protanganistic about such a program due to the psychological effect on both inmates and their families. A minute's thought will show how debasing this program would be to the wife who comes for a conjugal visit. Just what does she tell the guard who has her sign in: The relationships between a husband and wife are personal, sacred and definitely of no interest to any institution. Perhaps the plan is to print a paper titled "The Sex Life of the Average Incarcerated North American Male in Relation to Conjugal Visits as observed by the average North American Correctional Officer."

I can't understand why some genius somewhere in the "System" can't come up with an idea that would combine the two concepts and use them both as incentives.

A man is sentenced, he doesn't have too much to look forward to, maybe "The Wife" will be here on Sunday, (If it doesn't rain) or maybe she'll have enough money left this month to get here. I have often wondered how many marriages and families have fallen apart simply because the father was confined to an institution. Of course, "He should have thought about that before he broke the law". So should his wife and children. Let's face it, an incarcerated man has very little to look forward to but the hopeless routine of the institution, an occasional letter, (more occasionally as time progresses) and for the wife an even more hopeless situation.

The human animal is the only animal that feels a conscious need for others of the species. A man and a woman, relate, react, and mature together, if you remove one of them, they both must find another partner to relate, react, and mature with, thus we have divorces, and homosexuality in our institutions.

Now, just suppose No. 997296 know that every three months or oftener (if his record is clean and his wife and community agree) he can go home on T.L.A. for the week-end, Do you think this would serve as an incentive to an inmate?

Regardless of what the "System" may say about all the extra work, if a System were devised, and the paper work handled properly without the petty interferences of staff members at an institution, there wouldn't be that much additional work.

In most of the institutions today a man needs a lever, or, some sort of pull, to obtain a pass. It's almost like having to bribe your way out. A definitely stated policy and a regularly scheduled program would eliminate all the "Red Tape" and personal differences and solve many other problems that cannot be handled by institutional staff, who, half the time: a) don't have the time; b) don't have the authority: c) just plain don't care: d) or as in most cases don't want to get involved.

Now we come to "protecting the public". A law could be passed to make any violations of the conditions of a T.L.A. automatically result in an additional twelve months sentence plus the sentence from any criminal acts that might occur.

I can't help but wonder if a program like this wouldn't have a greater success rate than the present one. What do you think?

In the Province of Ontario there were 10,997 T.L.A.'s from August 1969 to October 1972. They don't mention any problems with T.L.A.'s.

Prison that sends . . .

Cont'd from pg. 3

their movements on the outside. The system is based on trust and while Drumheller has been a place where prison reform is pioneered, its prisoners are still counted three times a day, they're still locked into their cells at night.

Drumheller, Alberta's first penitentiary, was officially opened on Aug. 25, 1967, and its location on the outskirts of this town prompted complaints. The argument was that Drumheller, a mining town that had fallen on poorer days and needed more industry, was too isolated. Critics maintained that if prisoners' rehabilitation rather than punishment was the trend, Drumheller lacked proper facilities.

But those in favor won the day, prompting Calgary lawyer Milt Harrandence to say that it should be nicknamed Eldon's House, in honor of the fight made by Calgary MP Eldon Woolliams to have it situated in Drumheller, instead of a bigger city.

Director Jutras - the penitentiary service calls wardens directors now - may find it ironic that the MP who fought so hard to have Drumheller established is the same MP who escalated the Yves Geoffroy case into a cause celebre. And while the circumstances surrounding release of wife-killer Geoffroy from St. Vincent De Paul Penitentiary in Montreal are probably unique, any clampdown that might come from the affair will hit hard at Drumheller's very philosophy. For at Drumheller, lifers get temporary absence passes too-one, for example, one has been commuting to university in Calgary.

Mr. Jutras observes that Drumheller "is known as the most community-oriented institution in Canada. And the fact it is situated in a small town has helped to make it so. Because it's a small town, the citizens have got to know the inmates, to accept them as human beings. That might not have happened in a larger place."

If prison officials are pleased by the town's reaction, many townspeople return the favor.

Mrs. E.A. Toshach, the wife of Drumheller's long-time Mayor, has organized Women's Groups to visit the prison for card games. She never has much difficulty finding volunteers and the card games go on three times a week. Foster Johnson, who has lived in Drumheller since the beginning of the century, sums up a common attitude: "Well, of course most people don't mind. The only complaint I've ever heard is that inmates take jobs that should go to people on the outside - that's been a complaint a lot this winter with unemployment getting so bad. But as far as being afraid of the inmates, locking their doors - never heard of anything like that. I guess maybe we're so used to them we never think of them as "convicts" like you see in the movies."

The Proprietor of a Drumheller Restaurant, Roman Chamchuk, is also an enthusiastic supporter of Drumheller's system of outings. He and his waitresses are accustomed to inmates dropping in for coffee and the restaurant has employed one convict as a cook.

Mr. Jutras says the inmate-cook, a man in his 50s, was "a habitual criminal...in for his umpteenth sentence." But for a year, he worked in the restaurant without incident - the longest he'd been out of trouble since his first offence, 30 or more years earlier.

Drumheller was designed as a medium-security prison for young offenders and reformable adults. It opened the year the death penalty was abolished for a five-year trial period, in a time of increasing public sympathy for prison reform. And its first Warden, Pierre Jutras, is a man who wants to experiment and he was willing to give up a job with more prestige for the freedom to do so.

Saskatchewan Freedom Group

Gerry Cole and Wm. Wales, co-directors of the Saskatchewan Freedom Group Society, will partially host the Cdn. Criminology and Correction Association conference, which will be held in Regina from June 24 to 29 of this year. The group's main role will be to provide evening entertainment for all inmates and ex-inmates that are attending the conference.

Their hope is that as many ex-inmates as possible will be attending the conference and that the attendance will benefit from the program.

"The way I see it, the more ex-cons that participate, the better the program. The whole thing is centered around helping inmates, and ex-cons to adjust to their society," says Wm. Wales.

REMEMBER
Cdn. Criminology and Correction Conference
June 24-29
Regina, Saskatchewan
If you can attend, ATTEND

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